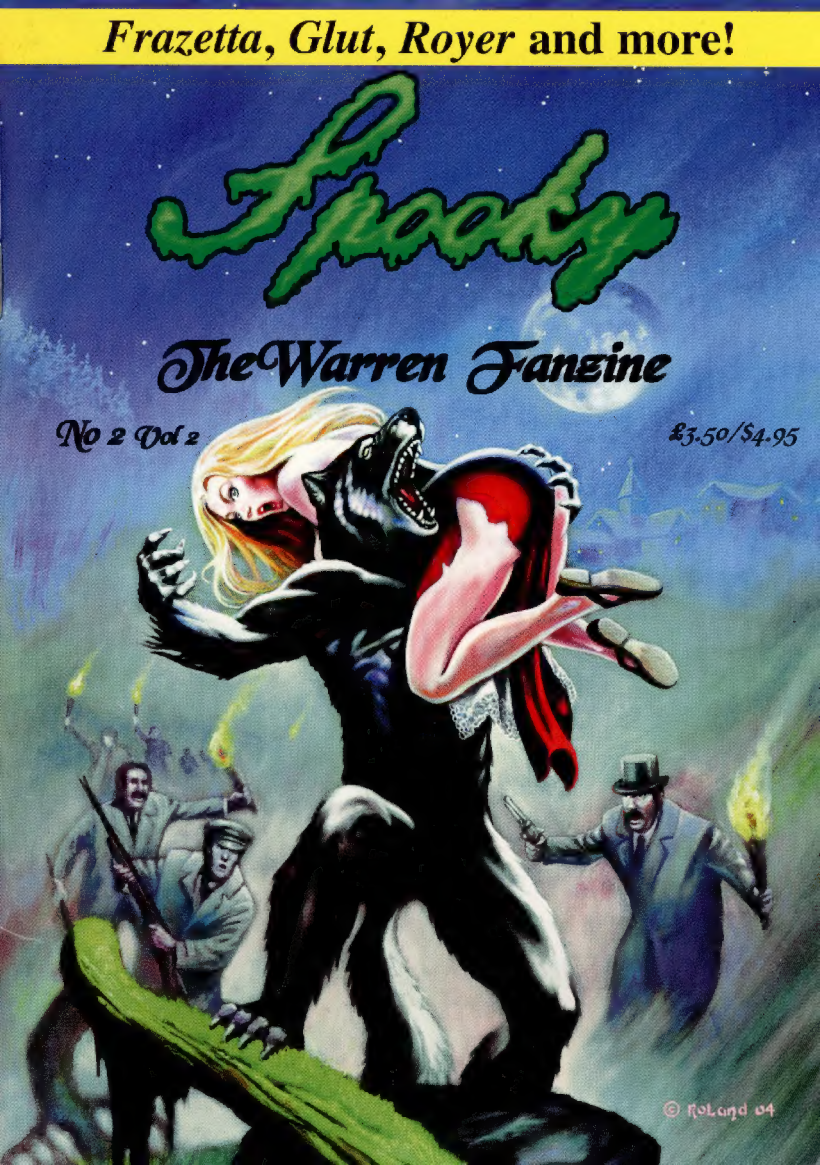
Frazetta, Glut, Royer **and more!**



You have in your hands ..... the latest issue of Spooky.

Welcome

Welcome to my world of Creepy, Eerie and Vampirella.

Spooky

Sales of Spooky have been great, thank you to Diamond, and to you! In this bumper issue we focus on Vampirella #1, and are lucky enough to talk to some of the greats who created that issue; **Glut, Royer, Frazetta** and **Cuti**!

Gosh!

And, the wonderful **Nick Cuti**, also continues his regular Spooky Column - **Cuti's Corner**! Also featured is a great new cover, by former Famous Monsters artist, **Harry Roland**!

On a sadder note, we said good bye to **Will Eisner**, earlier this year. **Will Wisner (1917-2005), Spirit** creator, **RIP.**

As always, I need to thank **John** Anderson at Soaring Penguin Ltd, and you, for buying Spooky!

Thank you again for your support. Spread the word!

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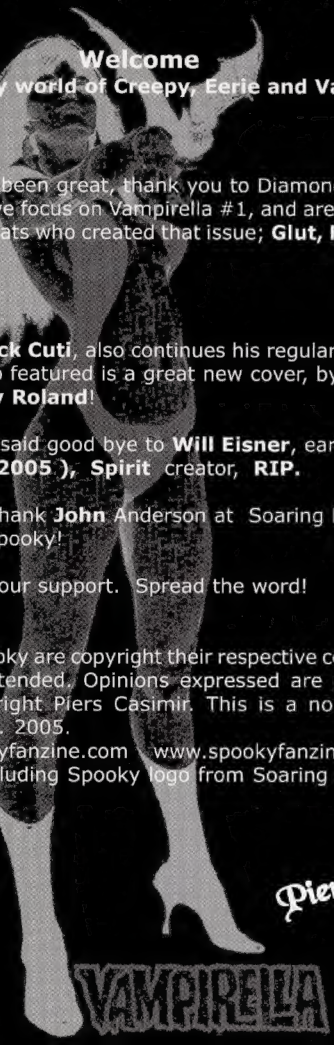
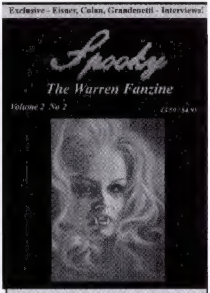
Piers Casimir





Spooky

NUMBER 2 VOL 2 2005

PIERS CASIMIR
Publisher

HARRY ROLAND
Cover

PIERS CASIMIR
NICK CUTI
PETER ENFANTINO
JOHN FENNESSY
HORATION SMALLPIECE
Writers

SOARING PENGUIN
Design Assistance

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DISCOVERING VAMPI IN THE LAND OF THE BANSHEE

By John Fennessy

It was a naïve thirteen-year-old with a dodgy seventies' haircut and corduroy trousers that first came across the wonder that is Warren. A pre-punk boy discovering the joys of music like Queen, Thin Lizzy and The Who and something of a Marvelite. It was a grey, wet summer's day in Buncrana, in Ireland, and I was looking for something interesting to do while my relatives hunted for souvenirs, chocs and toys. Accompanying my aunt I entered a dingy, cluttered seaside shop. Immediately this comic fan who had been collecting since seven was drawn to some old, dusty, cardboard boxes. Like so many others I had been brought up on newsagent spinner racks and Plus and Popular second hand half price exchange bookshops in the Days Before the **Comic Shop**. I shuffled through old women's magazines, Irish songbooks, historical publications, pulps, National Geographic, looking for my current favourites.

Amazement

To my amazement, I spotted a beautiful long-legged woman with flowing raven tresses, kinky boots and a flimsy red costume. It was the cover of **Vampirella #34.** I recognised the title from Martin Lock's UK fanzine reviews of the time where after dealing with the main companies he would say: "And now the Warren piece" - good old Martin. Ah, but this was not the usual comics; this was a life-like painting by Enrich that made an immediate impact. I gazed enraptured at the background panel featuring zombie-like creatures and this fan of Hammer films knew he had to have it. Some brute had rudely gouged the price of **27p** in blue ink on the cover, marring this macabre masterpiece with the stamp of commerce. But I was hooked. I searched through the box for more magic Warrens, unearthing such treats as Creepy #62 and #63, Eerie #54, 55 and 58, Vampi #32 and The Spirit #3. Needless to say I had to have all of them. My long-suffering mother supplemented my meagre pocket money and I wisely hid the Vampi cover from her.

Vampirella

At home on my uncle's farm in Tyrone I opened my prizes eagerly. Many of the artist and writers were new to me but I knew quality when I saw it. What struck me was that Vampi #34 for example, had six stories lavished with care and attention. Marvel's black and white horror magazines might have had two top stories if you were lucky with many fillers including reprints and text pieces. That issue of Vampi had art by **Jose Gonzalez**, Jeff Jones, Esteban Maroto, Ramon Torrents, Felix Mas

"I spotted a beautiful long-legged woman with flowing raven tresses, kinky boots and a flimsy red costume. "

"Reading these issues of Creepy, Eerie and Vampi was like having to re-educate my mind to cope with a new medium."

and Jose Bea and stories by the likes of Doug Moench, Steve Skeates and **Berni Wrightson**. Another innovation was that the middle story was in colour, not the Marvel colour of the time, but quality colouring. Creepy and Eerie also had spectacular examples of breath-taking colour work by Richard Corben, most notably on "**Child**". Seeing Corben's psychedelic rainbow hues for the first time was like swapping a portable TV for a Nicam Digital cinema screen. Reading these issues of Creepy, Eerie and Vampi was like having to re-educate my mind to cope with a new medium.

Jenifer

With The Avengers or Justice League, the story was the thing. My superheroes were the writers and I read these comics quickly to enjoy the latest tale of their colourful characters, ignoring the odd dodgy page of rushed art. Now I found myself turning the pages in a new way, quite often stopping to gaze in admiration at a Wrightson panel in a story like "**The Black Cat**" or "Jenifer" or a unique Jones' perspective. This was not illustrated plot - this was illustration. My school holidays were made. If I got tired of aunties, uncles, haystacks, tractors and cows I could immediately be transported to a New Orleans nightclub, a demon country, a Parisian whorehouse or a Victorian serial killer's lair. I remember so taken was I by the artwork that I even spent hours copying some of my favourite scenes, proudly and unwisely showing them to my young female cousins. What they thought of this Londoner and his pictures of axe-wielding maniacs and werewolves I dread to think.

Eisner

But it was not just the art - the stories were excellent and dealt with mature situations (not just nudity and sex) And for the first time I also experienced Eisner's **Spirit**. I could not believe the quality of the story and art. Some of my tolerance for hack comics was gone forever.

Gruesome

As I finish writing this, I realise it has not been so much about discovering Warren as discovering life - growing up. In truth, my young mind was troubled by the gruesome fates suffered by both heroes and villains in Warren stories. In amongst the science-fantasy, vampires and ghouls the most terrifying thing was the evil perpetrated by human (e.g. "The Man Whose Soul Was Spoiling") against human.

I lost something of my innocence that summer. And as they say in the comics - nothing would be the same again.

Voices from Beyond

" .....I forgot to tell you that I had a letter of mine published in Famous Monsters of Filmland
issue #186, August 1982 and a "You Axed For It" in FM issue #104, August 1974 under a
still of Lon Chaney Jr. . Just thought you would like to know.
Best Regards "

Jack Burgess.
Spooky says : Thank you Jack.!
"What a terrific publication! "

Jeff Rovin.

" The Adams interview was cool, and the T. Casey Brennan one, while brief, kept us on the right side of the Conjurella side of things which might have put a few of your readers off. The Great Frankenstein Fraud page gave me a brief chuckle as there's no actual Page 37 in Spooky to find the answers to.

I had hoped The Goblin article might be a little longer. I'm one of those rare birds that found the title held a lot of promise and just didn't have time to develop. Certainly those Alex Nino double pages spreads in #3 with Elias' character shots pasted on top were out of this world and still have to be seen to be believed. Cuti's Corner was oh too brief but welcomed.

I'm like a school girl with a big crush, in absolute bits because I know it's going to be forever until I see my little Spooky again! How soon until the next issue?

Paul Birch

Spooky says : Fair comment Paul. And I hope not too long until the next issue !

" I just received "Spooky" with the Neal Adams interview. It was very well done. "

Nick Cuti.

" Enjoyed the Neal Adams interview very much. I'm still a bit flabbergasted that THRILLKILL is still being talked about after, what is it, 30 years?

Great luck to you on this magazine. Looking forward to the next issue. "

Jim Stenstrum

Spooky says : Thank you ....
I don't think Oscar Wilde, George Bernard Shaw, Dorothy Parker or Ayn Rand could have put it better !

" Just wanted to say how much I love the new issue. I'm definitely going to continue to support your mag and hope it continues to grow! "

Billy Nocera

" I received my copy of Spooky. It brough back memories of working for Warren and admiring Frank Frazetta's art .

Warren gave me an actual size poster of Vampirella once.
I had a crush on her. I wish I still had the poster. "

Jim Laurier

" I really enjoyed Spooky, though my favorite Warren story is
probably "Muck Monster" by Wrightson over "Thrillkill." "Thrillkill's a good choice too. :-)

Any chance of an interview with Wrightson, or with Gene Colan, another of my Warren favorites, in a future issue? "

Mr. X

Spooky says : Gene Colan?! Watch out for a future issue!

" ... you are doing a great job. I never thought I'd live to see a Warren Fanzine "

Tony Loredo

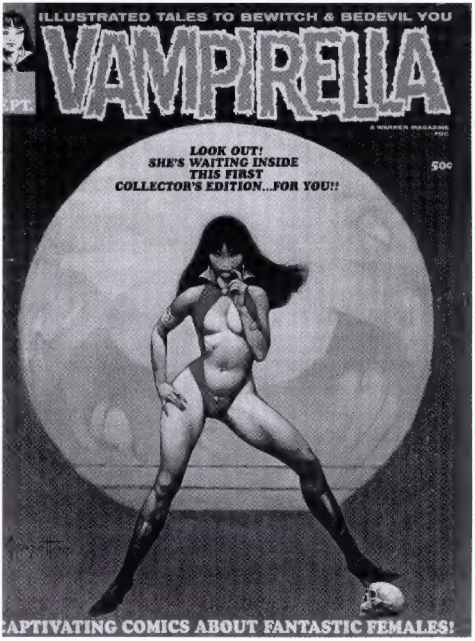
Spooky says : Or me Tony ! " ....I'm working in Cork at the moment and was checking out the comic shop. Guess who was staring back at me ? 2 issues of the latest Spooky (great ish by the way). The day after, 1 issue was sitting there, so the message is getting thru', "make mine Warren...", (apologies to Stan Lee).... "

Paul Gregory

... And congratulations on the latest SPOOKY! About a day after it showed up in the mail, I saw copies on sale in Jim Hanley's Universe, one of the biggest comic shops in NYC (right across from the Empire State Building).

Steve

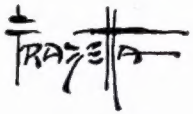
Frank Frazetta says :



"Hello Spooky,

"The 60's were memorable times for me and when I began to make a statement with my illustrations in the horror world. I created many famous oils for Jim Warren back then and I hope your magazine is successful and offers the same powerful impact to the new generation of SCI-fi fans.

Good luck Spooky,



Trina Robbins says:

"I designed Vampirella's costume, but the way I designed it, there was a lot more material than there is now. The way I originally designed Vampi's costume, it covered more of her.

To get an idea of what it looked like, see Frank Frazetta's cover of the first Vampi. I designed it and described it to him over the phone, and that's the result."

Mike Royer speaks...

Firstly, thank you so much for talking to me.

Q. Jumping straight in, how did you first get into Warren ?

MR : Well, you've asked me a question that no-one has ever asked me before ! [Smile]. I don't even know if I can truly remember. I do know, that, on the grape vine, I learned that, for what ever reason, **Jim Warren** had reduced his rates and was no longer getting artists like Al Williamson, Wally Wood, etc. There was a good opportunity for younger, aspiring artists to send samples... I must have sent some samples. I was 3,000 miles away from Jim Warren Publishing, on the California coast. I must have sent in some samples, and obviously he had the wisdom or poor taste, or, from a business sense, 'I can get this guy for $39 a page, let's go for it'.

However the process worked, I wound up doing a story called, **'Space Age Vampire'**, [Eerie #23] – the first story I did, and on the splash it has this running figure, down an alley, followed by a robot, or something. When I think about those times, I should be very grateful for Jim Warren, for allowing me the opportunity to practise learning a little bit about drawing, doing pages for his magazines. So it might have been a time, when one looks back and says, 'Wow. Is this all we're getting a page ?!'. But at the same time, he might have been sitting in his office saying, 'Wow. Is this all I get for $39 a page ?!'. One doesn't know.

I openly had some personal conflicts with Jim Warren, but I will always be grateful for the opportunity to do those things, to experiment, to do stories, where someone would say, **'Mike. Square balloons ?!'**. Well, I wanted to do something different. And apparently, Jim had enough faith in some of my abilities, that there were a handful of times he would send me a page, where a contributor had drawn Creepy or Eerie introducing the story, and either it hadn't been the standard he wanted, or he had told them to leave it blank, but I remember doing, maybe three times, doing a Creepy or Eerie head shot on the front and the back of a story.

I probably ought to go back and look at all that stuff. If I do come across it, in my boxes labelled, 'Mike's Life', I look at them and cringe, and it's like, 'Oh, I don't want to be remembered for this'. But at the same time, it was a great opportunity to be paid for experimenting.

Q. You were a prolific Warren artist .....

MR : Well. I drew the very first **Vampirella** story before it became the series it was. I recently read something, when someone reprinted, whoever owns all that material now, the first book, and the review said, '... and Mike Royer's amateurish attempts'. Well, realistically that is a valid criticism. There is some of that work that is extremely amateur. But I was probably intimidated by the fact that, here is a story where I had to draw liknesses of Jim Warren and **Forry Ackerman**, and was given no reference material. So that was hard...

It was fun doing Vampirella, although I did use photographic reference, because I wanted her to be as realistic as possible. But in retrospect it probably is pretty

amateurish. I think the point where I was finally learning something, was the last story I did. That's when I had the first problem with Jim Warren. I did the pages. I felt pretty good with about 80% of it and I

$39 a page. I must have had an ego then I ' I'm worth more than $39 I'. If I had the originals, I could sell them, and then I'd make more a page. So I went to a stat office, where I was living in California, and for all of the pages had photostats done, wrapped those up and sent them to Jim

remember having fun drawing these Wally Wood type little naked girls running around, with pitch forks and their devils tails. It was something about the lead character going to Hades, and drawing all sorts of other historical characters around a swimming pool. Villain's from history and so on. I was pleased with it, and I didn't like Jim keeping all the originals. Especially when it's only

Warren. Three days later, the phone rings, I answer it, and it's Jim Warren saying, 'How dare you unilaterally make the decision that you will retain the original art. This is unacceptable. You will send the art to me. We will not reproduce from those stats'. Well, I was faced with a situation where, he hasn't paid me yet, and if I fight this I might not get paid. So, I boxed up the originals and sent them. In that interim period, between when I sent the stats and sent the originals, I did a little fine tuning and tweaking things. So I was very curious, when the

magazine hit the news-stands to look at it, and see what I suspected, that it was printed from the Stats. So he had probably already sent it off, for film, when he called me to say, this is unacceptable. That really ticked me off. I didn't know whether I had a right to be that upset ? It seemed extremely arrogant. But then again, he might have thought,

MR : Really ! Well, the first job where I tried to do wash, and it was amateurish, but I did her a couple of times in 'introducing' stories. I remember one that had to do with fire, and the lead character's lover/

IT WAS HARD TO TELL WHICH WITCH WAS WHICH IN THAT ONE, HUH! ONE THING'S FOR SURE! IT'S NOT TOO OFTEN A PERFORMER AS YOUNG AS TEDDY GETS A ROLE HE CAN REALLY SINK HIS TEETH INTO!
THAT'S ALL FOR THIS ONE, GANG!
MR

'who's this arrogant punk sending me stats ?'. I just decided then that I didn't like Jim Warren, and it was obvious that I was never going to get another script because I had made that unilateral decision to keep my originals.

Soon, afterwards, I attended the **Seuling Convention** in New York, maybe in 1972. Jim Warren had sometime in the few months before the convention been on the television series, 'To Tell the Truth'. Three men would stand there and say, 'My name is Jim Warren', etc ... And then a panel of celebrities would try to, by asking questions, determine, which of the men was the real James Warren. Now all these years later I can't tell you which number Jim was (let's say number 2). Well at the Seuling Convention, where these banks of elevators opened to the dealers room, I was on opposite sides of this **elevator** bay. Jim Warren steps out of the elevator. I step out, and there's wall to wall human flesh between us, and I yelled, 'Hey Jim Warren ! I saw you on, **'To Tell the Truth'**. I voted for number 3 !'. So that kind of solidified the fact that we would never be doing business again.

Q. But you did make a great contribution to Warren. And your Vampirella ... a lot of people admire. A lot of people liked your Vampirella.

wife being destroyed in fire ? The title page of the story ... I had a reclining Vampirella across the top of the page. And what delighted me, at some point in the mid to late 70's, I picked up a Mexican Spider-man comic, and the artist had swiped my reclineing Vampirella, except it was Spider-man. I thought, Wow ! People are swiping me !

I liked drawing Vampirella, although the only reference I had was one wash drawing that **Frank Frazetta** had done. I still have all that stuff in my files. The letters from Jim, the Frank Frazetta still. I save everything.

Q. Maybe your Vampirella was so good, because you have an eye for beautiful women ?!

MR : I love women ! My wife declines sitting at a table at Conventions with me because she says, 'I don't want to cramp your style !'. I'm just an incurable flirt. But, the business man in me realises that

if I get attractive woman to a table, she'll look at the art, and 30% of the time she'll buy something. ***Q. Can you mention what you are doing now ?***
MR : In May of 1979 I started working, on staff, for the **Walt Disney** Company, until 1993. I quit at that point the staff job and took the position as a full time free lancer for the Disney stores, which continued as a full time position until mid 2000. And then suddenly everything fell apart. Disney had made promises to stockholders [allegedly] that weren't met. And of course, traditionally, the management that had taken over Disney in the mid 80's, if there were problems of that nature, they got rid of talent. And especially if they were over 40. So I became a victim of the down turn in the consumer products industry.

And so I did some work for computer game animators, and looked at the hand writing on the wall and said, 'You know. If I stay in California, hoping to get the work that now myself and 900 other guys are looking for I'm gonna use a lot of my savings'. And it doesn't make any difference where I live as a free lancer. I could have moved somewhere out of Los Angeles ten years earlier. So I returned to my home state of Oregon. Took advantage of California real estate. So now I don't need to worry about that mortgage payment. I'm in a wonderful climate like Southern California, but I also have the other three seasons, and the Disney work that I do now, is for a company called Pin USA and they produce collector lapel pins, which I guess is really hot, for their clients, which are Disney Stores Japan, Disney Collectibles, Disney Auctions, and Disneyland. I just finished a set of Signs of the Zodiac using the character Stitch, morphing into Crabs and Scorpions and so on.

And I do recreations of work that I did with **Jack Kirby**. Also artists will send me their recreations of Jack's pencils from something that **Vince Colletta** inked and they want me to ink it the way I would have inked it. The only thing that I've never been asked to recreate is something I did in a Jim Warren magazine. And I'm afraid if any one ever asked me to do that, as opposed to the Kirby stuff where if I'm recreating something I inked, I don't change anything, and if I'm making something that Colletta had originally inked I do my best to put myself in the mindset of 35 years ago. But if someone asked me to recreate a page I'd done for Jim Warren, I would do everything I could to correct it and make it better. So it wouldn't be a recreation any more !

Q. Finally, can I ask you if there are any particular artists you admire or then admired ?
MR : Well. As a kid my icons turned out to be artists who, in many cases, turned out to be only a decade older than me. One of the people I was fondest of as a kid, was Al Williamson. I got to know Al when I forced my way into his society, and he accepted me to the point where his mother expected me, when I talked to her, to call her, 'Mom'. That was a great time to meet someone who was my idol, and then become close friends. The artists that influenced me the most were Russ Manning and Jack Kirby. I learned from them how to tell a story. Academically I think I may still have some problems in drawing, but I know visually how to tell a story. Of course there were the giants of another time, the Raymonds, the Fosters and the

MEET MISS HORTENSE PILKINGTON! MISS ESTABLISHMENT! MISS STRAIGHT! MISS SQUARE! AND MISS-TAKE!
SHE'S ON HER WAY TO WORK! AND SHE'S AFRAID...'CAUSE SHE KNOWS TONIGHT'S REALLY GONNA TURN OUT TO BE A REAL BUMMER!
LAST ACT: OCTOBER!
AS MISS HORTENSE PILKINGTON STRAIGHTLY WALKED DOWN THE MOONLIT STREET, SHE RUED THE TELEPHONE CALL THAT INFORMED HER THAT SHE WOULD HAVE TO WALK TO HER BABYSITTING JOB ... ALONE... ESPECIALLY ON THIS, OF ALL NIGHTS ...THE LAST NIGHT OF DREADED OCTOBER! SUDDENLY, FROM THE SHADOWS ...
COLMA
AIIEEE-AAHHH!
WOOOOOOO!
BOO!
TWICKS 'N' TWEATS!
TRICK OR TREAT, LADY!
LITTLE HEATHENS! I'LL GIVE YOU A WHIPPING FOR A TREAT! THESE MODERN PARENTS AND THEIR NEW-FANGLED IDEAS ON HOW TO RAISE KIDS!
YI! SHE REALLY IS AN OLD WITCH!

Hogarths. And Milton Caniff, who was not only an artist, but wrote great stories. Warren Tufts who, in the 1940's and 50's, took the best of Alex Raymond, Hal Foster and Milton Caniff and created '**Casey Ruggles**'. And then, his magnus opus, Lance, which was a true masterpiece. And at Warren, there was one artist, I can't remember his name, who did such clean, sharp, crisp layouts and panels. There were so many great artists that I would meet at the old Phil Seuling comic Con. And I think that's where I met Roy Thomas.

Everyone else who knew him in those days had a crush on his first wife. Probably the only mistake I thought she made was dating Jim Warren, after she and Roy divorced. We always wondered, how could she date him? OK. Handsome, successful business man. Any woman would find him attractive and want to date him. But Jeanie(?) , we just thought she was special... and if you're reading this Jim, forgive me ! I've mellowed, I'm not the jerk I used to be, or at least I think so !

I'm sorry that he didn't make the Convention [San Diego Comic Con 2004] as people joke with me, 'cuz I tell it like it is. But if push comes to shove, if he had been here, it would have been **neat** to see him. I haven't seen him, in probably 25 years.

And of course ..... thank you very much.
MR : You're very welcome. Thanks for asking, thanks for remembering!

Mike Royer Warren CheckList.

Creepy

30	Dr. Jekyll's Jest	1969
32	L..Executioner	1970
37	I Hate You ! I Hate You !	1971
38	The Way Home!	1971
	Sleepwalker!	

Eerie

23	Space Age Vampire	1969
24	Head for the Lighthouse!	1969
25	The Ting in the Cave	1970
27	All Sewed Up!	1970
32	Soul Power!	1971
34	He Who Laughs Last...is Grotesque!	1971

Vampirella

1	Last ActOctober! (*See opposite*)	1969
2	Vampirella:Down to Earth!	1969
4	Closer than Sisters	1970
5	Escape Route	1970
6	Darkworth!	1970

the Don Glut interview

Q. Firstly, I've discovered you are very much a man of many talents ! Writing, comics, books, film, television, animation, video, music, dinosaurs..... !

DG : It's either that or get a day job !

Q. What were your childhood influences, in terms of what you were either reading, or maybe watching on television or cinema ?

DG : Well, as far as when I was reading, I read a lot of comic books when I was a kid. When I was very young, I was usually at the mercy of what my mother bought me. It generally tended to be the Superman books, or things that were published by Dell, So I had a lot of the Disney comics .... Little Lulu..... things that weren't too "harmful." My mother did not approve of the horror comics. As a very little kid I was actually afraid to read them. I would see them on the newsstand and once in a while I would quickly flip through them, and look at the pictures and kind of shudder, but I never actually bought or read any. I remember some relative of ours giving my mother a box filled with comics, I guess, that their own children had outgrown. And so I could have them for free. Of course my Mom didn't look to see what was in that box. We took a trip up to a place called Holy Hill, which was in Illinois. My mother was very religious. We were going up to this combination religious sanctuary and tourist attraction. It was a couple of hours trip, and she noticed that I was very quiet for a while. I was sitting in the back seat. And these were all horror comics, or at least most of them were. Pre-Comics Code, non-EC, sometimes quite gory horror comics. I was just fascinated by these. Eventually Mom checked out that box and did me a "favour," like so many mothers do, and threw them away ! And that's when I really got hooked on horror comics. Right after the Code came in and horror comics were apparently gone forever, I found coverless copies of many of them – including the ECs – that were sold in the States in packets of three with the covers torn off. It wasn't until years after that, thanks to old book stores and people selling comic books via mail order, that I actually got to see some of those covers. I was also able to replace some of the books that were in that original box of freebies. As far as what movies I was watching, I really liked Westerns, Comedies, also Science Fiction movies. And then as I

"My mother did not approve of the horror comics."

got a little bit older, horror movies, monster movies. As a very little kid I was scared by monster and horror films, even some of the "scarier" SF movies like "Invaders from Mars." Then one day, in the middle 1950's, right in-between the first two Creature from the Black Lagoon movies, a magazine published an article on Bud Westmore, the makeup shop at Universal Pictures, and his shop. And explained, with lots of colour photos, how they did the monster effects. At that point, they weren't scary any more. Monsters were cool, they were interesting, they were fascinating, and I really wasn't afraid of monster movies ever since that time. In the middle to late 1950's, I finally got to see some of the Universal Frankenstein, Dracula and Wolf Man movies, which really pushed buttons on me … got me excited. I loved those movies, and I saw them at theatres before they put them on television. And of course, after that, it was the Hammer films. Most of my life I've been a fan of the old gothic style monster. Frankenstein, Dracula, Werewolves, Mummies. All those types of things. And of course, somewhere along the line, I started to collect the EC Comics, which were a tremendous influence on my writing style to this day.

Q. Did you read any of the more traditional fiction, like Edgar Allan Poe ?

DG : Oh yes. There was a period when I was about 15, 16, 17 years old, when I read a lot of the classics. I read a lot of Poe, I read the essentials like "Dracula", "Frankenstein", "The Strange Case of Dr.Jekyll and Mr.Hyde", all the things that they eventually seemed to make movies out of. And I also read a lot of science fiction, and Edgar Rice Burroughs, whose writing and plotting very strongly influenced me.

"I read the essentials like Dracula, Frankenstein, The Strange Case of Dr.Jekyll and Mr.Hyde ."

Q. It sounds as if those interests have carried on through your life ?

DG : Exactly. Yes, to this very day.

Q. In terms of your Warren involvement, you wrote a huge number of stories for Warren, and also articles for Famous Monsters. How did you first get involved with them ?

DG : There was a period, before I actually started writing for Jim Warren, that he and I had this big feud going on. (I won't go into the details of that, as it involves other people .....) But there was a period when Warren and I weren't speaking to each other. And a few opportunities came along, through Forry Ackerman, who was my agent. He was also editing Famous Monsters. I think the first thing I wrote for Famous Monsters was an article on Boris Karloff. Karloff died, and Famous Monsters did a special issue devoted to him. I was afraid that, if I used my real name for the article's by-line, Jim would reject it, so at that time I was using a whole batch of names I'd invented for one reason or another, one of which was Victor Morrison. Now that name came from Victor Jory and Bret Morrison, actors at one time or another who had played The Shadow. Victor Jory in the movie serial, and Bret Morrison on the radio show. I was a big Shadow fan, so I put those names together and wrote this article on Boris Karloff for Famous Monsters.

And then Forry called me shortly after that, and said Warren was starting a new magazine ... didn't yet have a title, but it was about a 'mod witch', as he put it. And Forry was going to write the story with that character, but they needed back up stories. Actually, before that happened, Forry called me and said Warren was looking for new writers for Creepy and Eerie, and he thought I might fit the bill. So, he said Warren wanted the new writers not to submit original stories per se, but to adapt stories that had already been published. So he gave me a bunch of paperback books, and said, pick out some stories, and have punchy endings. It was my first story, 'The Devil of the Marsh', based on a story by, possibly, Nathaniel Hawthorne. It was illustrated by Jerry Grandenetti. That was my very first, published comic book story. It came out in Creepy. After that, Forry called me with this idea for this 'mod witch'. He said that they wanted stories for the back, but I didn't necessarily have to adapt existing stories, I could submit my own originals. The book turned out to be Vampirella, and I wrote every story, with the exception of the one Forry wrote, the original origin story of Vampirella, and another story at the back by Nick Cuti. So that became an ongoing thing, and I was writing quite a few stories for Warren. I was one of Warren's only writers at that time, and then a lot of other writers started submitting things. My input gradually went down, from most of the stories in the

" Forry called me shortly after that, and said Warren was starting a new magazine ..."

issue, to a few stories in the next issues, to a couple of stories per issue, to maybe one story per issue, and then one every several issues. Eventually my input just petered out.

Q. You had a lot of input into Vampirella #1 ….. ?
DG : Oh yes, I did a lot. And some of the stuff I did over the years, I didn't get credit for. The names got left off, or other peoples names got put on. So I actually did more than you would know by just looking at the names in some of those subsequent issues of Vampirella, Creepy and Eerie, also Famous Monsters.

Q. Presumably at that point, James Warren knew it was you and was comfortable with that ?
DG : Yes. He found out. Forry told him it was me. Forry told me that he actually wanted to know who this new writer was, because he liked my work. I haven't seen Jim in years, but the last time we saw each other he was very friendly and everything, like nothing had ever happened.

Q. There was a story called, 'Last Act: October!' (Vampirella #1), and the main character, the baby sitter, picks up a copy of Creepy #29. Was that in the script ?
DG : I don't remember. It probably was. I am notorious for putting 'in' jokes in just about everything I do. Little things for the fans to discover. I have things in my movies. I have things in my novels, short stories and comics. I have things in just about everything I've done, that connects them all. I look at everything I do as taking place in the same universe, no matter which company publishes or who films it. And I always try to put some little linking clue that connects all these things.

Q. In Vampirella #2, in 'Queen of Horror!', you have a character called, 'Gorry Hackerman'.
DG : When I wrote that script, he was actually Forry Ackerman for real, but somebody along the line, maybe Forry, changed it to 'Gorry Hackerman'. The original script had 'Forry'.

" I always try to put some little linking clue that connects all these things."

Q. The 'Goddess from the Sea', story, was illustrated by Neal Adams.
DG : Yes, which was a thrill for me, because when that first issue of Vampi came out, I had stories illustrated by Neal and

also Reed Crandall, a former EC artist, which was a big deal for me. I was a big Reed Crandall fan, and also of Neal, who wasn't that well known at the time. I was very much flattered that those two artists illustrated my stories. The idea of the protagonist being an illustrator or comic book artist … that was Neal's idea. I don't think I was specific as to what his occupation was. But Neal gave it a sense of verisimilitude, by making him a character that he could relate to.

Q. You didn't have any direct influence as to who drew any one of your stories?

DG: No, I never really knew who was going to draw anything. Everything that came out was a surprise, except for "Devil Woman" some years later on which Alfredo Alcala and I worked together. Sometimes I was a little disappointed, other times I was ecstatic. You would send off your script, and then you hoped for the best.

Q. Again, in Vampirella #1, there was a story called, 'Spaced-Out Girls'. Do you recall it ?

DG : It was one of the ones I wasn't crazy about. It's pretty terrible, pretty crudely written. I was just learning how to write comics back then, so I don't have too much pride for most of the things that were published back then.

Q. It was still quite a nice story. In some ways it was quite modern and adult for its time ?

DG : Many of them were. I think Vampirella's main selling point was that it gave little boys, who were not old enough to, or allowed to by their parents, purchase things like Playboy. It gave them the opportunity to look at a lot of sexy girls, on the pretext that they were really just reading horror stories. The parents kind of ignored it. When we went to see the Hammer films, I'm sure many of us went, not so much to see Christopher Lee biting people, but we wanted to see the bar maids that were getting bitten — with the low cut dresses that they wore, the incredible cleavage, and so forth. We can say, 'hey, Mom, I'm going to see Dracula… '. And when you got to the theatre you were all googly-eyed over Martine Beswick, and Veronica Carlson, and all these Hammer babes. It was a safe way to be introduced to things that were a little more erotic. I remember when I showed my mother the first issue of

" … It gave them the opportunity to look at a lot of sexy girls. "

Vampirella. My mother's very prudish and I said, 'Don't get mad at me'. And I held out the cover with the Frazetta cover, and she looked at me as if she were really shocked. You could bring those kinds of things into the house, put them on the shelf with Famous Monsters and Creepy, and you didn't get into as much trouble as if you'd brought in a Playboy.

Q. When you were writing these stories, where were you living at the time ?

DG : I was living in Hollywood, California. I was, at the time, very much a part of the Hollywood hippie/rock and roll scene back then. And I wrote those scripts on a manual typewriter. Not even an electric. Today, your fingers can forget how much pressure to apply, to make a manual typewriter actually work. And I don't think I could use a manual typewriter. I remember vividly that I would go out to these rock night clubs to listen to some band or something. And while I was watching the band, my mind would be concocting plots. Then I would get out of the night-club. By the time I would get home it would be about 2:30 AM, and I would sit down sometimes and write the scripts afterwards, at maybe 3 in the morning. Then send them out first-draft, no rewriting. Sometimes I would get the idea for the surprise ending, or the host characters' puns. I would think of a pun, then I would try to think of an ending for the pun. Then I would try to figure out a story that would lead up to both that ending and also the host's comments. So it was like the tail wagging the dinosaur.

Q. Were you sending stories into Warren, hoping that they would be used?

DG : That was very risky because in those days you didn't submit a synopsis, you submitted the full script. Warren was only paying $25 per script, so it would take me an hour or so to write one, so I just cranked them right out, and sent them off. Most of them got bought. A few of them got rejected. I had a strange sense of humour, and sometimes I just don't take what I'm doing too seriously. I write something almost as a joke. I did a couple of those, and they didn't get bought. I remember I had just seen the movie version of 'The Red Badge of Courage' on television. And somehow, in my mind as I was watching it, the word 'courage', turned into 'fur-age'. I thought, what if I wrote a werewolf story, and I end it with that pun,

" I had a strange sense of humour, and sometimes I just don't take what I'm doing too seriously."

where Uncle Creepy, says something about, 'The Red badge of Fur-idge'. So that means the Werewolf has to be killed by a badge, so there'll be a bloody badge with fur stuck on it. That led to me recalling one of the favourite radio programmes of my childhood, which was, 'Challenge of the Yukon', featuring a Mountie named Sergeant Preston, and who had this dog called Yukon King. I took the name of the actor who played Sgt. Preston, made him the lead character. So I wrote a Sergeant Preston story that ended with a werewolf being stabbed by his Mountie's badge. It led up to that stupid pun ! And that was one of those scripts that got rejected. I did a sequel to Scaly Death, which was a prehistoric 1,000,000 Years BC type thing that I did, for Vampirella. And I did a sequel to that, which got rejected. A few years later it evolved into the 'Tragg and the Sky Gods' comic book that I did for Gold Key.

Q. So you could sometimes reuse rejected stories?

DG : Oh yes. I never like to see anything with potential go to waste. I'll go to my files every now and then, and I'll find something that was written 30 years ago, that was terrible, but there's some merit to it. For instance, right now, I found a novel I wrote, in the late 1960's or early 70's. That was very amateurishly written, but looking it over again I noticed it's got a good solid plot. So I'm rewriting it now. I think I have a publisher for it. The same thing happened with my New Adventures of Frankenstein novels, which were published in the UK, Germany, Spain, all over the place, but they were still pretty amateurishly written. I got the opportunity a few years ago from ScaryMonsters magazine to have them all published, so I rewrote them, brought them up to date, polished them up, so those are not going to waste either. They're coming out as we speak. That leaves in my file one more completed book that I wrote back in the sixties, which I'm going to re-do. If that's published, my entire inventory is clean. Everything I've done, that has any merit whatsoever, excluding my pre-professional work, will be in print somewhere.

Q. When you were writing for Warren, you had a story in 1972, then there was quite a long gap until about 1980?

DG : Yes. There was a whole period when a couple of things happened. I started getting quite a bit of work from the colour

"Everything I've done, that has any merit whatsoever, excluding my pre-professional work, will be in print somewhere."

comic book companies — Gold Key, Marvel, DC, that sort of thing. Things that I think of as comic books like Captain America and Tragg and the Sky Gods, as opposed to comic magazines like the Warren titles. And also the whole look of the Warren books and the content changed dramatically. And they brought in some new editors, who were basically using writers that they knew better than me, and were more friends with. Those writers started getting all the work, and I just drifted away. And I don't know if I could really have written some of that newer-type stuff. Really much of it left a bad taste in my mouth, and I don't know if I could have written it.

Then, in the 70's, I did that story, 'Devil Woman', which was illustrated by Alfredo Alcala. The name of the character was Lona . Lona was really the mate of another comic-book character that I'd created but never was able to sell, called Man-Lizard. Man-Lizard would have been Earth's first super hero. He was an outcast caveman like Tor was. He wore a pseudo-costume, with a dinosaur head helmet, and he had a crude outfit made of dinosaur skin, with trunks, cuffs and boots made from Mammoth hair. It was the green outfit, with the reddish, brown hair, and a yellowish horn, on top of the green helmet. But I was never able to get Man-Lizard going, so I took his mate from that series, which was Lona, and put her in this "Devil Woman" story. The intent being for that to become a series. I actually wrote the plots for about five more stories, but Warren, or who ever the editor was, never went ahead with it. They remain in my files as plots.

Q. That story was drawn by Alfredo Alcala. Did you meet him?

DG : Oh, yes. He lived in Hollywood for a while. We did a number of things together. For "Adam" magazine we did a science-fiction series called 'Terra O'Hara', which was a Barbarella type strip, but sexier … raunchier. This would have been late 1970's, early 80's. I remember all the titles of the stories were sexy versions of famous titles, like, 'Whore of the World', 'Lust in Space', etc., and I particularly made a point to stay away from anything relating to StarWars, as I didn't want to get the Lucus Organization angry at me … maybe not get another assignment. But I never did get another assignment from Lucas anyway, so it became a moot point. So, Alfredo and

" I met Larry Ivie in 1962, at the World Science Fiction Convention, in Chicago."

I worked together on that. We may also have done something together at Marvel. I don't remember.

Q. I always thought Alfredo Alcala was a fantastic artist.
DG : Yes, he was.

Q. Am I right in thinking, he's no longer alive ?
DG : He died about five years ago. He was like many artists from the Philippines at the time. Came over to this country, but left their families in the Philippines. And then they would send back home money over to support their family. A lot of them did that …..

Q. Not sure if I've got this right, but did you meet Larry Ivie at that time ?
DG : I met Larry Ivie in 1962, at the World Science Fiction Convention, in Chicago. He was one of the first professionals that I knew as a friend. He was a bit older than me, but like me he never officially grew up. Larry remembered a lot of things that I remembered, from his childhood. His childhood and my childhood overlapped. He was always a wealth of information, remembering vividly details about some obscure comic-book superhero, or radio program, or movie serial, and he would know instantly the answer. So we became friends and met at the World Science Fiction Convention, which was my first convention. I remember he was in the costume contest as Batman. Larry was really into making amateur movies, as I was, and he made mostly super hero and Flash Gordon type films, and did a lot of things with costumes and flying characters.

Q. Is Larry still alive ?
DG : Yes. Larry is living in a small town in northern California, which is where he grew up and lived as a kid. Then he moved to New York. He never really quite achieved the heights that I think he aspired to, and he finally pretty much gave up and moved back to his roots. He's kind of a reclusive too. He's hard to reach. If I call, he'll respond, but a lot of other people have tried….. There's someone who's a very well known comic book historian, living just down the street from Larry, and Larry won't open the door to him. So, Larry's a 'funny guy'. He's got his own little peculiarities, but Larry's a unique individual. He claims credit for a lot of things. Some …. maybe all of it is

" I met with Jim, and Bill DuBay was there."

true. I learned a long time ago …. Roy Thomas once said, 'that a comic book cover will sell that issue. The contents of the comic book, will sell the next issue'. And that can be applied to people also, or freelancers, trying to get in the door in any of the professions. The first impression when you walk through the door…. If you look like a weird character or might present some problem, chances are you'll never get your work adequately evaluated, because you've already been judged. Larry is a little strange in some ways, and very much a purist. I think Larry did in fact inspire a lot of things that became published series or characters, but probably the powers that be, in each case, decided that it would be better to hire someone a little more mainstream in their approach and habits. People don't like to rock the boat, and that, I think, is what happened to Larry.

Q. Did you ever get to visit the Warren offices ?

DG : Yes, I was there once. I was on a trip to New York, and I went up there. It was like several rooms, not really big. I met with Jim, and Bill DuBay was there. I remember seeing Bill in the outer office. Bill I just ran into at the American Film Market in Santa Monica, California. He's produced a CGI-animation kid's DVD about a talking train or something, and he was trying to sell that….

Q. You also wrote, 'The Empire Strikes Back', book. Which I expect everybody asks you about ?

DH : Yes, I've been interviewed extensively about that. The book was being written as the movie was being shot. So, I wrote it from the screenplay, interviewed Lucas twice, and saw some of the pre-production paintings, storyboards, stills. Then I just tried to envision what the movie would be like and put that vision on paper. The strange thing is that, as far as I'm concerned, there are two versions of the movie. There's the movie that I saw in my head and the movie I saw on the screen. I first saw the movie at a screening with Roger Dicken, who had done a lot of special effects for Hammer and various people. He rigged the impaling of Christopher Lee in "The Scars of Dracula", made and operated the chest-burster, in the first Alien. He's done a lot of notable things. He was my best friend at the time. The first shot of the movie came up. I nudged him and said, 'Oh, my God. It's different'. To this day,

" I don't know how I'm going to die, but I know when it's going to be. It's going to be somewhere between the words 'Action !', and 'Cut !'."

when I think of the book, different images come into my mind. I tried to make the book more of a literary piece. A real novel. And that was my first draft. It was substantially longer than the one that got printed. But the Lucas people wanted a more fast-paced, "pulp fiction" type book, which I finally gave them.

Q. Finally, what are you doing nowadays ?

DG : Nowadays I'm doing basically two things…. Mostly what I'm doing is making low budget, campy, very sexy, horror pictures, through our company Frontline Entertainment. The latest is 'Countess Dracula's Orgy of Blood', which will be coming out on DVD, from Image Entertainment in May, 2004, and debuts on TV in August. So far it's the best and most commercial movie we've done. It stars Paul Naschy, who's an international horror film star, and Glori-Ann Gilbert, a cult icon. It's a sequel to "The Erotic Rites of Countess Dracula," which I made a couple of years before.

The other thing I'm doing …. I really don't want to write books anymore, except the series of dinosaur encyclopaedia's I've been doing, or comics. I'm working on the fifth volume in that series right now. They've become standard reference works, used by scientists and layman alike. The series is called, 'Dinosaurs: The Encyclopaedia'. But they are so time-consuming, they're not really cost-effective. And one day a week I work as a volunteer fossil preparatory at the Natural History Museum of Los Angeles County. I'm currently working on a new Tyrannosaurus skeleton recently collected by the museum in Montana. Its about three fourths complete. The other thing is my old rock and roll days career coming back. I played in a lot of bands in the 1950s and 1960s, but the one I played in from '67 to '68 was called, 'The Penny Arkade'. That was produced by Michael Nesmith, who at the time was with The Monkees. We recorded about 25 songs, none of which got released, and then the band eventually broke up. But there have been rumours about us over the years, bootleg albums too. We've been very popular among aficionados of 1960's rock bands. So Sundazed Music in New York is going to release, for the first time ever, all our 25 songs on a double CD. We were very much influenced by The Beatles, a little Monkees influence, but mostly by The Buffalo Springfield. We were somewhat psychedelic, but a few of our songs were a little off the beaten track, even going into country.

Q. You've done an awful lot in your life !
DG : Well, I wish I could do more ! I'm just starting to do what I want. When I directed my first movie I was already 50. A lot of my friends are retiring at that age or being phased out, because of ageism…, I'm lucky, I'm independent. As long as I have the energy, I'm going to keep doing it. I don't know how I'm going to die, but I know when it's going to be. It's going to be somewhere between the words 'Action !', and 'Cut !'.
I'll just keep going. I want to go on working ….

Q. And you're making the films you would like to watch ?
DG : Sort of. What we're making now are very erotic, campy, sexy, low budget movies using the classic icon-type monsters … Vampires, Mummies. I like to say, that if Hammer Films had continued to make horror pictures, but they kept up their trend of getting sexier but their budgets went way down, this might be what they were doing. Hammer is what I've been emulating mostly in doing these films.

Gosh ! And finally of course, thank you SO much for your time and insight.

"And thank you.
It's been fun and brought back a lot of good memories."

Don Glut Warren Checklist.

Creepy

29	The Devil of the Marsh	1969
30	Drop In !	1969
31	A Wooden Stake for your Heart !	1970
32	I… Executioner	1970
42	A Change of Identity	1971

Eerie

24	"Scavenger Hunt"	1969
25	Isle of Vrykolakas	1970
30	The Return of Amen-Tut!	1970
32	Soul Power!	1971
36	Crocodile	1971
39	Head Shop	1972
40	The Prodigy Son	1972

Vampirella

1	Death Boat	1969
	Two Silver Bullets	
	Goddess from the Sea	
	Last Act: October!	
	Spaced-Out Girls	
2	Queen of Horror!	1969
	Rhapsody in Red!	
4	Moonshine	1970
5	The Craft of a Cat's Eye	1970
	Scaly Death	
	Ghoul Girl	
	Luna	
8	Signs of Sorcery	1970
9	Monster Bait	1971
16	Girl on the Red Asteroid	1972
18	The Dorian Gray Syndrome	1972
23	Cobra Queen	1972
90	Devil Woman!	1980

Famous Monsters

	Numerous, including ….	
5	Letter	1959
131	Gene Roth Obituary	1977
135	Letter	1977
165	Interview	1980

VAMPIRELLA #1

by Horatio Smallpiece.

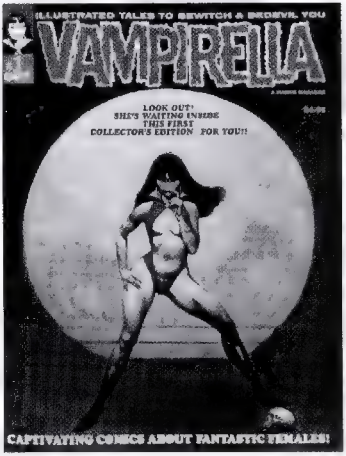
Vampirella #1. Where do you begin ? A milestone in comic history, whose legacy lives on today. Great writers and artists too. Some of the all time masters were involved in the first issue of Vampirella. **Frazetta, Royer, Glut, Adams, Sutton,** to name but a few. Also, Billy Graham, Crandall, Tony Tallarico, Ernie Colon. And of course, the influence of **Warren** and **Ackerman.**

So much has been written about this first issue. And who hasn't heard the name Vampirella, whether from the classic Warren days, or the more recent, and much weaker, I think, current offering.

Vampirella initiated comics, magazines, videos, a cartoon (see Spooky #3), plastic models, posters books, competitions, look-a-likes and more.Yet where did it all begin?

Back in 1969, almost 40 years ago, came the first issue of Vampirella. A run that would last **112 issues,** and include a famous Annual and Special too.

The first issue, was of course fronted by that great **Frazetta** painting of Vampirella. A painting so simple, yet beautifully executed. And the detail of the bat on the moon, a superb subtlety. Originally the cover was probably going to be the picture created by Aslan, but the Frazetta painting was rightly used instead.



It seems likely that the idea of Vampirella came from a number of sources and influences. The brains of Jim Warren and **Forrest Ackerman,** the interpretative mind of Frazetta, the influence of **Trina Robbins** (see this issue !), with probably a bit of Barbarella thrown in too. And perhaps the necessity came from the need to make some money, to keep the good ship Warren afloat !

Sixty four pages, behind that classic cover, announcing , 'Captivating Comics about Fantastic Females !'. Who could resist ? **Bill Parente** was editor, though it seems likely that there was some Archie Goodwin influence as well. The late, great **Tom Sutton** had the honour of drawing the first story, 'Vampirella of Draculon', credited to Forrest J. Ackerman as writer, and simpler and more light weight in style than subsequent offerings. It's possible that Jim Warren was not entirely happy with this initial scene setting, but what it did do, was to set the scene for the Vampirella dynasty. Just five pages long, and featuring a '**bubbly**' splash page with only a towel and some bubbles to hide Vampirella's modesty. Years later she would not be so shy. Certainly this first story is quite a light weight offering, with minor witticisms and visual jokes, but perhaps for the time, the story wasn't really all that bad ?!

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AN APPRECIATION

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Sixty four pages, behind that classic cover, announcing , 'Captivating Comics about Fantastic Females!'. Who could resist? **Bill Parente** was editor, though it seems likely that there was some Archie Goodwin influence as well. The late, great **Tom Sutton** had the honour of drawing the first story, 'Vampirella of Draculon', credited to Forrest J. Ackerman as writer, and simpler and more light weight in style than subsequent offerings. It's possible that Jim Warren was not entirely happy with this initial scene setting, but what it did do, was to set the scene for the Vampirella dynasty. Just five pages long, and featuring a **'bubbly'** splash page with only a towel and some bubbles to hide Vampirella's modesty. Years later she would not be so shy. Certainly this first story is quite a light weight offering, with minor witticisms and visual jokes, but perhaps for the time, the story wasn't really all that bad ?!

HI THERE! WELCOME TO THE COOLEST GIRL-MEETS-GHOUL MAG ON THE MARKET!
MY NAME'S VAMPIRELLA. I'M THE NEWEST THING IN COMIC MAGAZINES - AND IF YOU TAKE ME HOME WITH YOU, YOU CAN CALL ME VAMPY. (THAT'S IF I DON'T CALL YOU FIRST!) I'VE PUT OUT THE CALL TO ALL THE CREEPIEST EERIEST ARTISTS IN THE COUNTRY (AND YOU KNOW WHAT COUNTRY TRANSYLVANIA!) AND I'LL BE A BLOODY PITY IF ANYONE IN THE MID-E-MORE WORLD DOESN'T GET THE WORD ABOUT THIS WAY-OUT MAG OF FANTASTIC FEMALES. MY AMAZING ADVENTURES EXPLODE HERE EXCLUSIVELY. VAMPY (ISSUE) AND IN ADDITION YOU GET HALF A DOZEN OTHER SOCK-IT-TO-I DO SHOCKERS FOR GALS AND GUYS WHO'RE WISE TO THE SLOT IN REWITCH-ING COMICS! WHAT MORE TO TELL, WANT BLOOD? YOU GOT!
COME WITH ME...

Vampirella's modesty. Years later she would not be so shy. Certainly this first story is quite a light weight offering, with minor witticisms and visual jokes, but perhaps for the time, the story wasn't really all that bad ?!

pencils work so well, what you get is still a classic Neal Adams offering. Again (!) Don Glut produced the words.

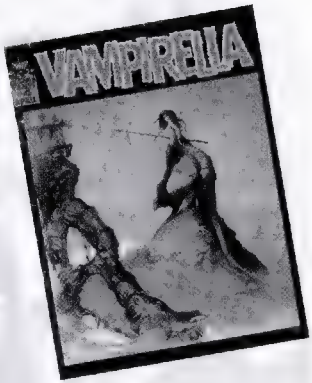
'Last Act: October!, saw Don Glut scripting for the excellent Mike Royer (see this issue !). The style is very much, Mike Royer ! You know it when you see it, and the tale has a lovely Halloween feel about it. The use of the cover to **Creepy #29**, hidden in a panel, is a nice touch too. An old lady on trick or treat. Personally I think she has the right idea about these door-knockers, but the ending may make you think differently.

Again by, you've guessed it, Don Glut, 'Spaced-Out Girls !', was one of his earlier efforts, and not a personal favourite of his. Underrated **Tony Tallarico** does a great job on the art, depicting every man's fantasy, or is that nightmare ? I wonder if there was a little of Don Glut, in the story's hero, Kenne Barcroft ?! Perhaps not a classic, but I liked it ! Finally, following the omnipresent Captain Company advertisements, came 'A Room Full of Changes'. An early effort by writer **Nick Cuti**, and artist Ernie Colon, who's deft art work probably saves what is a nice, but perhaps more suited to Creepy, story.

So .... Where does that leave us ?! Obviously, **Vampirella #1** was a landmark issue. Whilst perhaps not the quintessential Vampirella. There is no doubt that #1, came as a very welcome addition to the Warren stable, both in terms of a fantastic character, but also from a financial aspect too.

Maybe James Warren wasn't entirely happy with this particular issue, but the way she evolved, could surely only bring him pleasure!

nicola cuti speaks

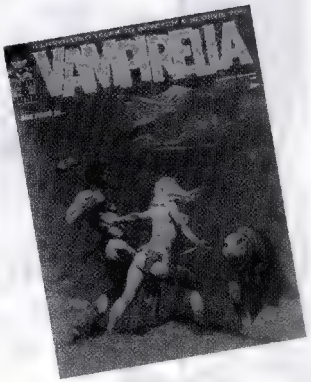


Firstly, thank you, so much, for talking to me.

Q. Firstly, how did you initially break into the world of Warren ?

A. While I was in the Air Force, serving as a Security Policeman, I did a lot of reading, just about anything I could get my hands on. I especially loved reading "Creepy" ever since I picked up issue one in my teens. I decided to try my hand at writing a story. I wrote a science fiction/horror tale called "Grub" and mailed it in to the Warren offices. This was in 1969. They bought it for $25.00 and had it illustrated by the very talented, Tom Sutton. I became hooked. When I had some leave time I visited the Warren offices and met Jim Warren. He was very encouraging and so I wrote more stories for him.

Q. I assume you often worked at the Warren offices – is that so ?



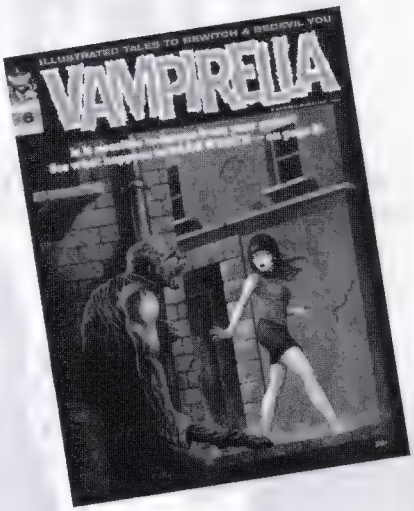
A. Not while I was freelancing for them. I worked from my home and I had gotten a job as an art assistant for the legendary sci fi artist, Wallace Wood. I was working at his studio in Valley Stream, Long Island. Later I went to work at Charlton Comics as assistant editor. Eventually I did join the staff at Jim's office in New York, as assistant editor to Louise Simonson.

Q. What was the 'office' atmosphere like ?!

A. It was loose and easy going so long as there weren't any tight deadlines to meet. I had my own office which I later shared with former DC publisher Carmine Infantino. Carmine and I became good friends. We even went to California together to work at the Marvel Animation studios. But getting back to Warren, Bill Mohalley was the art director, a hard worker and very competent at his job. Louise was very sweet, a lovely woman, but a very good boss. The books always went out on schedule and had very high artistic standards mostly due to her. Jim was also a hands on publisher

and would often make critical decisions involving the books.

Q. You were an incredibly prolific writer at Warren. You must have had great fortitude to write so many wonderful stories ?

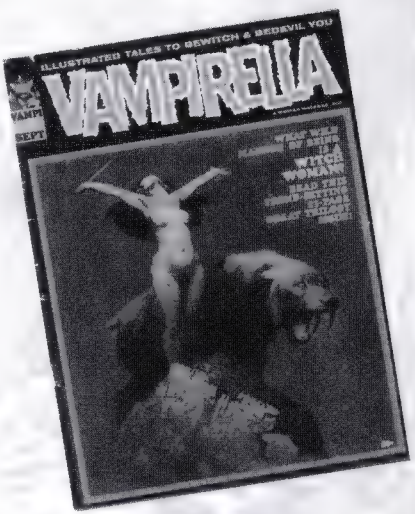


A. Thanks. I never realized how many stories I had written for Warren,101, until "The Warren Companion" was published. I was listed as number five of Warren's most prolific writers. As for "...wonderful..." , well, I like to think some of them were pretty good but many were quite forgettable. I just love to hear and tell stories. I think I wrote even more stories for Charlton.

Q. I assume you met some great writers and artists during your Warren years ?

A. The best! Wallace Wood, the incredible Berni Wrightson, Tom Sutton, the celebrated Frank Frazetta, William DuBay. The list goes on and on.

Q. Wally Wood, in various writings, often comes across as a 'sad' person. Is that your recollection of him ?

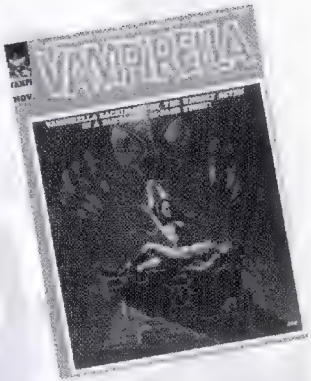


A. Woody had a lot of ghosts haunting him. He was a genius in a field which the public did not recognize as a serious art form and he came from a rough and ready background. His father was a real outdoorsman, a lumberjack and cowboy, who had problems understanding a quiet son who spent most of his time drawing pictures. But there was a lot of joy in him too. He loved playing practical jokes on friends and if he got to know you he would give you gifts of his art or whatever items of his you might have admired. He was a very quiet person until he got to know you. Then he would open up and you had a new and very likable friend.

Q. You wrote a story (Cold Blooded Murder) with Bill Mohalley, who was briefly interviewed in Spooky #1 . Bill comes across as a real stalwart at Warren?

A. As I mentioned, Bill was an extremely talented art director. It was his idea to collaborate on the story and I took this as an opportunity to teach Bill how to write a comic book story. I showed him how to break a story idea down into a page by page outline and then into

panels. I had hoped Bill would continue to write but I don't think he did which was a shame because I feel he had definite ability as a writer. His interest, however, seems to be in art. The last I heard from him he was art director in a very slick magazine dealing with science fiction. I wish him the best.

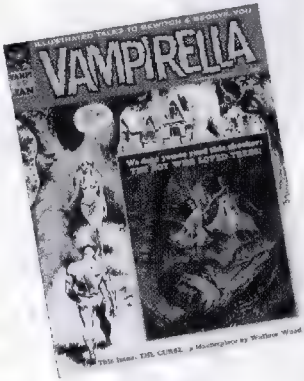


Q. 'The Haunted Child', from Vampirella #25, is probably my all time favourite Warren story – ever ! And was drawn by the wonderful, Auraleon. Do you recall writing the tale ?

A. Gee, no I don't. One of the tragedies about being a prolific writer is that most of your stories go right out of your memory as soon as you get the pay check for it. You're only interested in what tale you can come up with next.

Q. Do you have your own favourite Warren story ?

A. I guess, "Cilia" is one of the few stories I've written which seems to still be a good read years later. It's the story of a sea captain who is rescued, when his ship goes down in a storm, by a beautiful sea creature and the tragedy which follows. I also have a fondness for "Dime Novel Hero" about a young boy out west who sends for a legendary hero to save his family from a werewolf who is devouring his family's sheep herd. Another one I like is "The Saga of Honeydew Melons" concerning the bizarre results of attempting to bring entertainment to the men who mine the Asteroid Belt. And lastly, "Little Guy" a tale of a little person who extracts a terrible revenge against the magician who murdered his beloved wife.

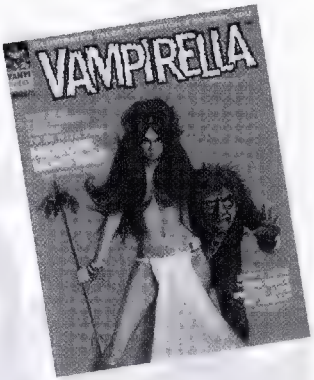


Q. At times, you also acted as Contributing Editor, Assistant Editor and Consulting Editor. What did those roles involve ?

A. Jim gave me the title of Contributing Editor to keep me from writing for his hated competitor, "Web of Horror" and later he gave me the Consulting Editor title to keep me writing for him while I worked for other companies such as Charlton and DC Comics. Assistant Editor was the only title where I actually worked in the office and performed the duties of the title.

Q. Can you tell me a little about the background behind the 'POW!', Magazine project ?

A. "POW!" was a project Woody and Jim Warren were working on together. I don't know who originally came up with the idea but it was an attempt to produce a comic magazine which dealt with adult topics, infidelity, rape, etc. Woody wrote "I wonder Who's Squeezing Her Now" and Frank Frazetta painted a cover, a naked blonde girl on top of the Empire State building holding a gorilla in her hands, and we were all set to begin. The three of us had a meeting in Jim's office but Jim and Woody could not come to terms. Jim agreed to treat us to supper to show there were no hard feelings and at the restaurant Woody said he would like to continue the project if I would be editor. Jim agreed. Unfortunately, I later had a falling out with Jim and the project was abandoned. The artwork was published in other magazines. After about a year or two Jim and I became friends again but it was too late to renew the project.

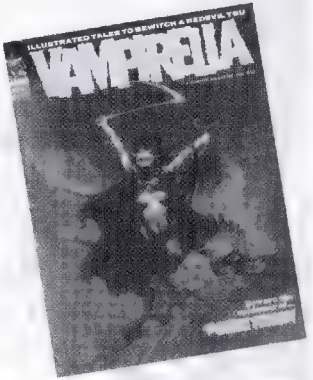


Q. In the Warren magazine that never was, 'Yesterday, Today and Tomorrow ', it featured the story 'Macchu Picchu' which was also featured in Vampirella #71, in 1978. Is there a story behind your involvement in that?

A. I'm afraid I can't help you there at all. I wasn't involved with that magazine.

Q. Can I also ask, did you do an E-Man comic in the seventies, based on Heidi Saha (with big glasses) and her father ?

A. Yes, the female character in "The City Swallower" was based on Heidi Saha. I met the Sahas early in my career and found them to be charming people and great comic book fans. So, as a thank you for their kindness I made Heidi and her father into characters in an issue of "E-Man".



Q. Finally, you were involved with Warren up until almost the end. How did that feel at that time ?

A. I was working at DC Comics when I heard about the end of Warren Publishing. I can't tell you how sad I was. It was like losing an old friend. There were lots of great memories and wonderful people many of who became close friends.

Creepy	28	Grub !	1969
	32	A Wall of Privacy	1970
	33	The Full Service	1970
	36	Weird World	1970
	37	King Keller	1971
	38	The Cosmic All	1971
	40	The Disintegrator!	1971
	41	Prelude to Armageddon	1971
	89	The Hungry Dragon	1977
	92	Instinct	1977
	93	Cold Blooded Murder	1977
	94	Etran to Fulsing	1978
	95	The Empire of Chim-Pan-Zee	1978
	96	Bonga and Me	1978
	97	Snaeg!	1978
	98	The Image Makers	1978
	99	An Old Game	1978
	100	Tale of a Fox	1978
	105	Dime Novel Hero!	1979
	110	The Demon Hater	1979
	111	A Switch in Dime	1979
	115	Et Tu, Brutus	1980
	116	The Highway	1980
	117	The Silkie	1980
	123	Jelly	1980
	124	Malphisto's Illusion	1981
	126	Dreamer!	1981
	127	Daddy is a Werewolf	1981
	130	Mythologia	1981
	131	Bella Donna	1981
	134	Orson Who?	1982

Eerie	26	The Scarecrow	1970
	27	Face It!	1970
	29	Loophole!	1970
	30	Mirror, Mirror	1970
	31	Lady in Ice	1971
	47	Liliths	1973
	77	Cronk: Stalker in the Maze	1976
	80	Cronk: Queen of the Purple Range	1977
	81	Golden Girl	1977
	88	Deathball 2100 A.D. Junkyard Battles	1977
	93	Honor and Blood The Einstein Factor	1978
	94	Honor and Blood Dead Man's Ship	1978
	95	Nuts!	1978
	96	The Shining Sea	1978
	98	Honor and Blood	1979
	99	The Shining Sea	1979
	108	A Lion in our Midst	1980
	111	Moto Psycho Cop	1980
	129	Mercenary!	1982
'1984'	1	The Saga of Honeydew Melons Momma, Can you hear me ?	1978
	2	The Microbe Patrol	1978
	5	I Wonder Who's Squeezing Her Now ?	1979
	8	Once Upon a Holocaust!	1979
	10	Thinking of You	1979
	14	Womb with a View	1980
Rook	1	Buck Blaster: And the Starbusters	1979

Vampirella	1	A Room Full of Changes	1969
	2	The Octopus	1969
	3	One, Two, Three	
		The Caliegia!	1970
	4	Closer Than Sisters	1970
	6	The Brothers Death	1970
		Darkworth!	
	7	Three Witches Prologue	1970
		The White Witch	
		The Mind Witch	
		The Black Witch	
		Three Witches Epilogue	
	8	Snake Eyes	1970
		The Gulper	
	9	Vampi's Feary Tales	1971
	11	The Green Plague	1971
	14	The Wedding Gift	1971
	16	Cilia	1972
	25	The Haunted Child	1973
	59	The Beast is Yet to Come	1977
	61	Brother Hawk	1977
	62	Fog	1977
	65	The Pharaoh's Lady	1977
	67	Fish Bait	1978
		Home Sweet Horologium	1978
	71	Machu Picchu	1978
	72	Invasion of the Cyclops Monsters	1978
	76	Time for a Change	1979
	77	The Night the Birds Fell	1979
		Futura House is not a Home	
	78	Little Guy	1979
	84	Vampire Bite	1980
	86	The Pygmalion Effect	1980
	95	The Fox	1981

98	The Fox	1981
101	The Fox	1981
102	The Fox	1982
103	The Fox	1982
104	The Fox	1982
106	The Fox	1982
108	The Fox	1982
112	The Fox	1982

Captain Cosmos takes time off,
to pose as **Nick Cuti.**
Or is it the other way around ?!

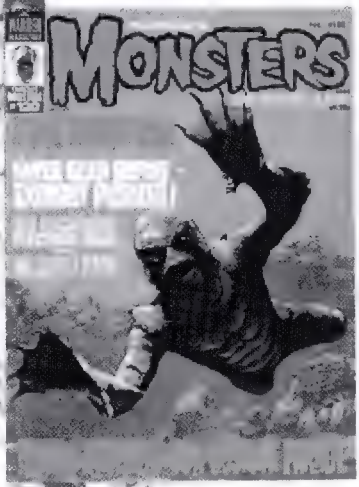
harry roland speaks

Q. What comics and books did you read when growing up ?
A. All of the comics little boys like, I guess. Batman, Superman, Tarzan. I also liked the Disney Donald Duck and Scrooge Mcduck comics. Funny stuff. As for books, I've read almost everything that Edgar Rice Burroughs ever wrote and a lot of Arthur Conan Doyle.

Q. Did you enjoy monster films too ?
A. Absolutely! We had a very small theatre a few blocks from my our house that still did the Saturday morning matinees for kids. My older brother Jim would take me there when I was 6 or 7 years old. I remember seeing King Kong and being afraid of the giant ape. My brother explained to me that the monster was just a jointed "doll" that they moved with camera magic. I spent the rest of the film trying to figure out just how they did that and really wanting one of those "dolls".

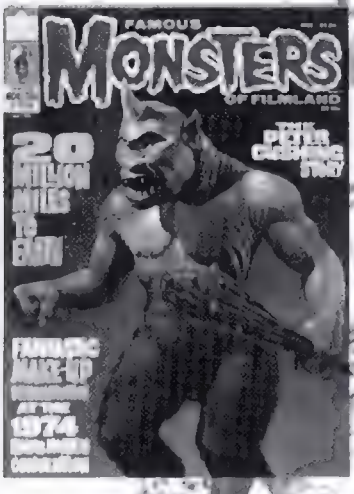
Q. Have you always had a desire to paint ?
A. Well, to create, actually. I've also done some miniature and prop making for TV and video. I'm always experimenting with new or better ways to do things. I guess I've tried thousands of ways to apply paint or to get a particular effect in an illustration in a faster, better way. It has a lot to do with boredom. If I work more that 3 days on a project, I start to get tired of it. I always felt that the only true art in a painting or drawing is just the concept of it. To paint or create it is just a mechanical thing utilizing math, mechanical drawing and some chemistry for the most part. It's the idea or image that you create in your mind that is the truly creative part of it. I guess you could say I'm constantly evolving my painting "techniques".

Q. Do you have a preferred medium , and did you develop your own particular style?
A. Oils, definitely. The oil in the paints creates the beautiful wet look you can't get from watercolor or any other medium. Years ago, like many other artists at that time, I tried to paint like Frank Frazetta. After many, many paintings I gave it up and just painted pretty much keeping to any reference photos I had or could find. Now that I'm back into the comics/fantasy field, I keep getting compared to Frazetta. Go figure. Personally, I don't see it.



Q. How did you get started with Warren?
A. That's a funny story. Back in the late sixties, I would make infrequent trips to New York and stay with Jeff Jones or Berni Wrightson and Mike Kaluta, who were room mates. On one trip, I decided to try my luck at picking up work. Jeff Jones told me to go see Jim Warren at Warren Publishing and mention his name. Sure enough, Jeff's name got me into his office. Jim was an extremely

aggressive guy, which I'm not. Well, he looked at my portfolio and then spread his hands apart so that one was at desktop level and one was over his head. He said "If this distance represents all the artists I use, from the best to the worst, you'd be here"! With that, he dropped the lower hand from desktop level down to the floor. Needless to say, I was crushed. Deep down, I knew he was right but his method was pretty heavy-handed. Years later, in 1975, I decided to try him again with



a different approach. From a distance, I did a very tight, comprehensive illustration of Ray Harryhausen's Cyclops from The Seventh Voyage of Sinbad and attached a Famous Monster's logo to the top of it. From the distance of a few feet away, it looked like an actual printed cover. At that time in my career, I was working in Package Design and we made very tight comps of the products for presentation. I mailed it off and a few days later he called me. "Where have you been all my life?!", he roared over the phone. I never told him that we had met before. Anyway, he told me to go ahead with it.

Q. You were described in FM as a 'new discovery'. What had you been doing before your FM covers ?

A. Mostly Advertising Agency work. At about this time, I was pretty much doing the Art Directing wherever I worked and eventually struck up a partnership to create Brady/Roland Graphics. These days I'm strictly freelance.

Q. How did you approach the covers ? Preliminary request ? Preliminary sketch ? And how much freedom did you get with the content ?

A. It was my intent to continue doing the covers the same way. I'd present, through the mail, a comprehensive sketch with a cut-out FM logo and then go right to the finished product.

Q. The FM #120 'Creature from the Black Lagoon', has a photographic quality about it. Is that a fair comment ?

A. Absolutely! I always work from "life". I found a photo of the Creature "suspended" underwater and just did a pseudo background. The color was made up of course, since the original movie was black and white. I think the color is what made that cover receive a lot of comment. These days I use a digital camera and pose myself for all of the figures. Mostly to get the proper proportions, perspective and clothing folds...that sort of thing. It saves a lot of time. I even make props to photograph. If I have to draw a spaceship, I just build a model of my own design and take picture from whatever angle I need. The digital camera is one of the greatest aids an artist can have.

Q. How did you feel when you saw the final printed copy ?
A. I bought as many as I could find.

Q. Both Cover paintings, I think, rank with the best of the FM covers - Superbly painted monsters, as you would expect on an FM cover. Why only two ?
A. Well, thank you. Actually, there was a third. When I would receive a check for each painting, Jim Warren would include a note with the suggestion for the next one. That's all I would get as instruction. Next, paint the Creature From the Black Lagoon…next, paint the unmasking scene from Lon Chaney's Phantom of the Opera. I sent him a nice Phantom comp and never heard anything back. I waited a few more weeks and finally called. The number had been disconnected. Checking around, I found that Jim Warren had taken ill and FM was out of business. That turned out to not be exactly true but I was never contacted again. One of his instructions in his last note to me was to do some sketches of Vampirella. He felt that Vampirella was never drawn the same way twice by the many artists who had done her. He wanted her to have the look of Frazetta's first cover of her…kind of young and innocent looking. I did a number of sketches but they never got sent off since I thought the company was defunct. A shame.

Q. Did you meet any of the Warren staff, or were you working 'from a distance' ?
A. No. I did get a phone call from the Art Director after I mailed the finished Cyclops painting to them. He said it had gotten damaged in the mail and he was sending it back for me to re-do. When it returned, there was what appeared to be a bullet hole nearly dead center of the package. Actually, it had obviously been crushed against something very sharp and pointed. As a result, the Cyclops painting that was printed is in fact, the second version and I think, a better one. Since that time, I always insure any art through the mail.

Q. Did you admire any particular artists at that time ?
A. Well, I mentioned Frazetta but I also really admired Hal Foster's Prince Valiant work. I also tried to draw like him for a long time but nobody ever compares my "look" to Foster. Also, all of the Brandywine school of artists, like Pyle, Wyeth, Schoonover and Norman Rockwell.

Q. And finally, what are you up to now – some interesting projects, I believe ?!
A. I'm working on two projects right now. One for Insight Studios Group which I don't think I can talk about yet. It has to be put together and presented to publishers for marketing. I can tell you that my part of the project has to do with a funny take-off of the old sci-fi films and TV shows of the fifties. The other is a 10 page short story by Sean Dulaney for Digital Webbing Presents. It's a Sword and Sorcery tale in full color. I'm painting each panel in oils which I'll "sweeten" up a bit in Photoshop. I have a feeling that both of these projects will make quite a splash. Also, if anyone is interested, my website www.harryroland.com is going to post a sales and commissions page in about a week. You can buy original existing art there or commission me to do something you'd like. I have made new paintings of the two Famous Monsters covers I did and they will be for sale there as well.
I should mention also, "Trying Times" which is the name of a web comic strip of mine that runs on at www.sunnyfundays.com It's a comical look at time travel. Think George Burns and Gracie Allen meet H. G. Wells.

And, thank you for your time !

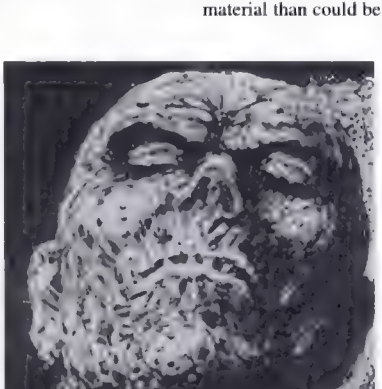
Warren Checklist - Famous Monsters :

118 Ray Harryhausen 55th Birthday tribute - Cover. 1975
120 Creature from the Black Lagoon - Cover 1975

THE MUMMY UNWRAPPED : A LOOK BACK AT STEVE SKEATES' TWISTED MASTERPIECE,

BY PETER ENFANTINO

The Mummy, much like his shambling cousin The Zombie, has never really garnered the audience of the other 'classic creatures' (werewolf, vampire, etc.) in comics. Up until the early 1970s, in fact, the bandaged beastie was content to rest in his four-color tomb, resurrected for the occasional EC or 'sub-standard EC' comic.



Way back in the dark ages, circa 1973, Warren Publishing, then the titan of black-and-white horror comics, was attacked by the nefarious offices of Marvel Comics. Not a verbal battle, the two publishers were duking it out at the suddenly robust magazine stand. Marvel was, at the time, just entering the b&w mag field with such titles as DRACULA LIVES, MONSTERS UNLEASHED, TALES OF THE ZOMBIE, and VAMPIRE TALES. Fairly decent titles (offering some good material at times, such as MONSTERS UNLEASHED's Man-Thing and Frankenstein Monster series, and DRACULA LIVES's adaptation of the Bram Stoker novel by Roy Thomas, sadly unfinished at the time of DL's demise) which were threatening to take a piece of Jim Warren's market pie. For nearly a decade Warren's titles were at the forefront of uncensored illustrated horror, primarily because they were the only ones out there - until the boys over at Marvel got the bright idea of experimenting with the magazine market. Since magazines did not have to be approved by the Comics Code, it left the door wide open to release more violent or sexual material than could be released in their four-color line. The first title in 1970, SAVAGE TALES, starred Ka-Zar and a certain Cimmerian barbarian who was just then getting wide exposure through reprint paperbacks. The issue was a smash and more followed.

Anyway, let me get back to Warren, who was more than a little pi**ed-off at Marvel (I can recall reading an interview with Warren in ROLLING STONE where he pretty much hinted at his desire to see Stan Lee's steaming entrails outside of their natural habitat). Ol' JW was no fool, his empire was proof of that. He knew that if he didn't try something different really quick, Cousin Eerie, Uncle Creepy and Vampirella might be standing in the unemployment line in no time. So, he sent word down from his throne high atop Warren Mountain that things were gonna change. One of the things that changed was EERIE.

Spooky

EERIE began in 1965 as a second banana to CREEPY, and never rose any higher than that. In fact, when VAMPIRELLA was introduced in 1969, EERIE became third banana (CREEPY sank to second, but that's another story). EERIE always seemed to be the dumping ground for stories not good enough to appear in the other titles (although EERIE did publish what I consider to be the best story ever to appear in a Warren zine, 'The Disenfranchised' by Tom Sutton in #39), so when the magazine announced that it would be transforming itself into a predominately series-oriented title, fans stood up and took notice (at least the four of us who were left did). But there was a small problem however: the characters created were one-dimensional beings trapped in cardboard worlds, populated by cookie-cutter secondary casts, doing uninteresting things. Oh, sure there was The Rook, still fondly remembered today as the benchmark of the EERIE series, and I still have a fond spot in my heart for The Goblin. But most of it was garbage, including the exploits of The Mummy.

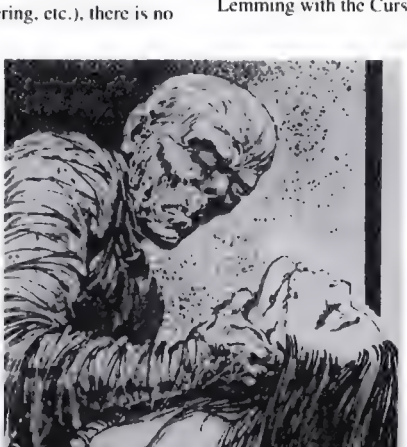
Steve Skeates' 'The Mummy' was introduced in #47, in a typically (for this series, anyway) slapdash and incomprehensible tale called 'The Mummy... And an End,' wherein we are introduced to Jerome Curry - a greedy and power-hungry guy, we're told - who finds an ancient amulet that allows him to transfer himself into the body of a mummy. Why he'd do this, I have no idea. But this allows him to shamble around Cairo and strangle beautiful women. Why he'd do this, I have no idea. Each story has the same set-up: a little about what's happened in the previous stories, The Mummy strangles a few people, and then he shambles off. Along the way, he manages to lose his amulet, which traps him in the Mummy's body until he can find it.

Skeates' amazing plotlines are little more than sketches. The Mummy becomes something of a horrific Fugitive (or, to stay within the comic medium, Berni Wrightson/Len Wein's SWAMP THING) in that he wanders from town to town, meeting a ghoul, Mr. Hyde and a demon in three successive issues. Each of these creatures are, A/

introduced, B/ battled, C/ dispatched, and D/ forgotten, in that order. This mummy never goes from Point A to Point B, but rather stays at Point A. Unlike Alan Moore's Swamp Thing, which shares some common ground with Skeates' The Mummy (man trapped in body of creature wandering, etc.), there is no feeling of a story being told, no resolutions, only questions. Like what exactly is this story about ?

But wait, it gets better!

Al Milgrom just happened to be writing 'Curse of the Werewolf', another lame-brained EERIE series going nowhere but down the toilet, when Skeates got the best idea since FATMAN, THE HUMAN FLYING SAUCER: he combined the two series and created The Were-Mummy!



Milgrom's Werewolf series ran in five non-consecutive issues of EERIE (#48-53, 1973-74), and starred Arthur Lemming as the soul-searching Werewolf. In the first instalment, he's afflicted with the Curse of the Werewolf and eventually murders his own pre-teen daughter. Since he has no recollection of any of his own transformations, he naturally pins the blame squarely on the shoulders of his adulterous wife, Angela, and heads off for the high country. There he meets a friendly band of gypsys, falls in love with one of their womenfolk, and for good measure slaughters every one of them! As she lays dying, the head gypsy (played by Maria Ouspenskaya) slaps Lemming with the Curse of Memory. This fills Arty's head with all kinds of distress, but, as he muses, it at least reminds him that his wife is about to be burned at the stake by the town constable for being a witch. Having an incredible change of heart, he heads back to his home town (Dwarves Bay) and rescues his wife just as she's getting the Richard Pryor treatment. As the final episode comes to a close, the reconciled lovebirds agree that their bad times are finally behind them and that nothing but joy awaits them in the future.

Then Arty turns into the Werewolf and kills Angela.

End of story.

Well, kinda.

(So ends part one of a two part series. See you next issue !)

Vampirella
of DRACULON
by FORREST J. ACKERMAN and TOM SUTTON

Cuti's Corner

CRONK

It is the dream of many writers to create a character of such strength and interest that the creator would be justified in writing a series of adventures based on his character. Sherlock Holmes, Doc Savage, The Shadow, Wonder Woman are perfect examples of what I mean. Often an author will be so completely identified with his character that no matter what else he writes, he will always be known as the creator of Superman or… whomever. I've tried this on several occasions with some success, "**E-Man**", "Moonchild" and "**Captain Cosmos**" and some failures, "The Fox" and "October Weir".

In the case of The Fox her failure was my own doing since despite encouragement, I had considered a Chinese Princess who could change into a fox to be a one-note character. She was created for one story and the other stories were a stretch because the point was: when imprisoned, with an imposter placed on her throne, she was able to use her ability to escape and regain her rightful position. I found her

unique power rather limiting since it was purely an escape mechanism and not much more. **Bill DuBay**, my editor at the time, loved The Fox, perhaps considering her as a gentler rival to "Pantha" or "Vampirella", but I eventually just kept submitting fewer and fewer "Fox" stories until she was all but forgotten.

There was one character, however, who I championed when no one else seemed to like him. His name was "**Cronk**". He was a humanoid boar from an alien world whose parents were killed by poachers. Cronk was adopted by a human family, as a pet, until they discovered he was intelligent and then he was raised as their son. As an adult Cronk becomes a starship pilot and tracks down his parent's killers, bringing them to a savage justice.

The character, believe it or not, was based on a real boar I knew while I was stationed in Cigli, Turkey as an Air Force sergeant. It seemed hunters had unwittingly killed a female boar and in remorse they brought one of her piglets? back to the base and gave him free roam. I was an area commander, in charge of guarding a nuclear bomb site in a remote section of Cigli and each day a snack truck, sentimentally known as the "roach coach", would arrive at our site to sell us our lunch. I recall one day buying a hot dog and then hearing a series of grunts accompanied by a nudging at my leg. I looked down to see a gray, bristled haired **wild boar** begging for food as if he were a pet dog. I bought two more hotdogs and fed them to him. Thereafter, whenever the coach arrived, here would trundle my little pal who would triple my lunch budget. I never forgot him, often wondering what his fate might have been once he grew tusks. Shudder. It was a natural step for me to use the little gray boar as the inspiration for the lead in my animal /human revenge story.

When I created Cronk, I was sharing an office with **Carmine Infantino**, the former publisher of DC Comics and a top-notch artist. He was known for his excellent "Adam Strange" sci fi stories for DC Comics' "Strange Adventures" and was the perfect artist to work on my intended series. I penned two "Cronk" stories, which Carmine illustrated, and then wrote a third but I left Warren Publishing before it was assigned to Carmine and lost track of it. Later, I saw the story in one of the magazines, **rewritten** and illustrated by one of the South American artists. The most disappointing part was Cronk was now human.

Cronk's human transformation caused me to lose interest in any possibility of continuing the series until one day when I was hired by my old friend Chuck Patton to work on an animation series called "Double Dragon". To my astonishment it seems Chuck had been a fan of Cronk and wanted to revive the series. At a lunch we had together, Chuck even showed me a magnificent sketch he had rendered as his version of the original character and I thought it was terrific. I began to rough out some story ideas but, unfortunately, the revival was never to be. Chuck and I had a serious falling out and the project was abandoned.

Cronk anyone?

HI, THERE! WELCOME TO THE COOLEST GIRL-MEETS-GHOUL MAG ON THE MARKET! MY NAMES VAMPIRELLA. I'M THE NEWEST THING IN COMIC MAGAZINES! AND IF YOU TAKE ME HOME WITH YOU, YOU CAN CALL ME... VAMPI. (THAT'S IF I DON'T CALL YOU FIRST!) I'VE PUT OUT THE CALL TO ALL THE CREEPIEST EERIEST ARTISTS IN THE COUNTRY (AND YOU KNOW WHAT COUNTRY: TRANSYLVANIA!)... AND IT'LL BE A BLOODY PITY IF ANYONE IN THE WHOLE WIDE WORLD DOESN'T GET THE WORD ABOUT THIS WAY-OUT MAG OF FANTASTIC FEMALES! MY AMAZING ADVENTURES EXPLODE HERE EXCLUSIVELY EVERY ISSUE AND IN ADDITION YOU GET HALF A DOZEN OTHER SOCK-IT-TO-YOU SHOCKERS FOR GALS AND GUYS WHO'RE WISE TO THE BEST IN BEWITCHING COMICS! WHAT MORE DO YOU WANT- BLOOD? YOU GOT IT! COME WITH ME...

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